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The San Bernardino County Sentinel

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Law Firm Tracked at Least Four Ramos Affairs



Mike Ramos

The law firm of Curiale Hirschfeld Kraemer tracked information suggesting that district attorney Mike Ramos

had sexual relations with at least four employees who currently or formerly worked in his office, according to information gathered for a report tendered by that law firm on January 12 and released by the county January 27.

The report itself together with information cross-referenced by the *Sentinel* and augmented by the law firm's investigative work product

that included interviews with district attorney's employees which were not included in the report either confirmed or otherwise indicated that Ramos' liaisons with women linked to him in previous public reports could in some fashion be substantiated.

The report was compiled by Glen Kraemer and Reed Schaper of the Curiale Hirschfeld Kraemer law firm, which

was paid \$140,000 for the work. The firm was retained by the county upon the recommendation of human resources director Andrew Lamberto and county counsel Ruth Stringer.

The county board of supervisors commissioned the report after Cheryl Ristow, an evidence technician with the district attorney's office, lodged a sexual harassment complaint

against Ramos in August.

Ristow has been on stress leave since July and has not been cleared to return to her assignment in the sexually violent predator/mentally disordered offender unit. She maintained in her complaint that she was retaliated against after the *Sentinel* published, on May 29, an article reporting that Ramos had engaged in **See P 4**

Colton Audit Ignored

COLTON—After spending \$65,000 for a management audit of city operations more than two years ago, city officials have buried it and its recommendations, refusing to release it to the public or even present its findings officially to the city council.

Moreover, the *Sentinel* has learned, in the last several months the city has embarked on a series of moves that run directly counter to the recommendations contained in the audit.

City officials were unable to explain why, precisely, the audit was undertaken, although in 2007 a report by then-city manager Daryl Parish indicated the audit would look into the staffing levels of the city's managerial ranks to determine if a reassignment or reorganization of duties was in order or whether City Hall needed to beef up its administration to accommodate anticipated future business and population growth within the city.

After the company recruited to do the audit, Citygate Associates LLC, performed its initial surveys of city operations and growth trends, updates on its findings were provided to Parish, who filed them and gave verbal briefings to the city council on what ground the firm had covered. But no finished audit or its report was ever presented to the council, which would have made the document a public one, subject to release to the public.

That may have been, the *Sentinel* has learned, because Citygate made several recom- **See P 3**

CCCC Withdraws Latest Old St. Mark's Tavern Proposal

For the second time in less than a year, the Chaffey Communities Cultural Center Foundation has withdrawn its application to modify its existing conditional use permit at Old St. Mark's Church at 525 18th Street in Upland.

Old St. Mark's Church, the original Episcopal church in Up-

land, was constructed at the corner of Euclid and F Street in 1903. In 1965, it was moved to its current location at 525 West 18th Street after the congregation, which now meets at the church located on 16th Street, outgrew the picturesque structure.

The chapel was acquired by the Chaffey

Communities Cultural Center Foundation, which serves as the benefactor to the Ada Cooper Museum and shares much of its membership with the Upland Historical Society. There had been some thought in years past to utilize the chapel as a museum or historical exhibit. Though that use

was never actualized, in 1997, the Chaffey Communities Cultural Center Foundation did obtain from the city of Upland a conditional permit to operate the 3,125 square foot Old St. Mark's church as a ceremonial forum where up to three weddings and/or funerals were held each week. The proceeds from these

ceremonies, which were restricted to concluding no later than 8 p.m. and host no more than 125 attendees, were used to support the Ada Cooper Museum.

In the fall of 2008, the Chaffey Communities Cultural Center Foundation applied for a modification to the conditional use permit **See P 6**

Asbestos Complicates Barstow Sheriff's Station Renovation

The discovery of asbestos in the ceilings, along with the other existing infrastructure shortcomings, has necessitated that the county increase by over \$100,000 the cost of renovating the Barstow sheriff's station.

On October 20, 2009, the board of supervisors awarded a construction contract to Abboud Dia-

mond Construction, Inc. of Moreno Valley for the remodel and renovation of the Barstow sheriff's station, located at 225 E. Mountain View in Barstow. During construction, several unforeseen conditions were encountered that require remediation and rework. Upon demolition of the ceilings, undocumented asbestos con- **See P 2**

Starr Succeeds McDougal as Montclair City Manager



MONTCLAIR—Deputy city manager Ed Starr will be elevated to the position of interim city manager on March 1 to succeed city manager Lee McDougal, whose retirement from the city

will be finalized in June, according to arrangements recently worked out and ratified by the city council.

McDougal, 58, who has been with the city in a series of increasingly re-

sponsible positions since 1976, will remain with the city in the capacity of special consultant for all of March, April, May and a portion of June.

In his special consultant capacity, **See P 6**

Cortes Focus of Complaint Lodged With DA

A group of 12 Grand Terrace residents has filed with the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office a complaint alleging that city councilwoman Bea Cortes engaged in multiple flagrant violations of Government Code Section 1090, the state of California's conflict of interest law.

The complaint, which was provided to the public integrity unit formed by district attorney Mike Ramos in 2003 to deal with violations of the public trust perpetrated by elected and appointed city and government officials, contains allegations that Cortes voted repeatedly over the last four years to approve



Bea Cortes

city payments to her employer, Terra Loma Real

Estate and compounded the matter by attempting to hide the matter from public scrutiny by failing to report her relationship with Terra Loma on the economic interest disclosure documents she is required to file as a public official.

Accompanying the complaint were minutes of Grand Terrace

city council meetings at which the votes in question were cast, Grand Terrace check registers showing the payments to Terra Loma, newspaper ads for Terra Loma Real Estate in which Cortes is listed as a real estate agent for the company and copies of her California Form 700s from 2002 through **See P 2**

The San Bernardino County

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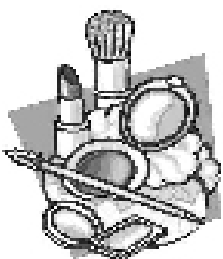
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Cortes from front page 2008.

Elected officials in California are required to fill out yearly statements of economic interest, known as Form 700s. Form 700s are intended to provide disclosure of the full range of elected and appointed governmental officials' economic interests, including all income and gifts to his or her entire household.

Up until September, Cortes for several years had a professional relationship with Terra Loma Real Estate. She also consistently voted, as a member of the Grand Terrace City Council, to approve the consent calendars that are a part of the council's agenda at its twice monthly meetings. The consent calendar, in Grand Terrace as in all cities, typically contains multiple items pertaining to the function of the city government, all of which are deemed non-controversial and routine matters and are bundled together so they can be approved in a single yes or no vote of the council. It is unheard of, in Grand Terrace and elsewhere, for the consent calendar not to pass and it is generally approved by a unanimous vote of the city council, although on rare occasion a dissenting vote on a consent calendar vote is registered.

In Grand Terrace as elsewhere, the consent calendar contains the city's check register, that is, a listing of the checks that have been written to the city's various vendors and contractors.

Asbestos

from front page
maintaining material was found, requiring immediate containment and remediation.

It was also discovered that the existing

Among the companies that have rendered service to the city of Grand Terrace over the last several years is Terra Loma Real Estate, which provided property management services to the city as well as brokering a property purchased by the city's redevelopment agency. City payments to Terra Loma, as to all other companies, are made by check. Those payments are then ratified by the city council as an item on the consent calendar.

Records available to the Sentinel show that the city made 37 payments totaling \$26,076.66 to Terra Loma between January 2006 and August 2009. Cortes participated in the votes to approve at least 34 of those.

While Cortes insists that she did nothing illegal in casting those votes, Government Code Section 1090 prohibits an elected official from participating in a vote on any matter in which he or she has a financial interest. A payment to a business owned by that official or a business that employs the official or one with which the official is professionally affiliated is construed as having a bearing on that official's financial interest.

In August, Cortes said she had not made any money in the previous 24 months as a real estate agent with Terra Loma so she therefore had no interest tied up with the company. "I have not received money from Terra Loma Real Estate," she said. "Due to the economy I have

main conduit system and wiring for the facility's communications and wide area network required replacement and relocation due to damage and structural obstructions. In addition, the existing underground sewer, potable water lines, and heating, venting and air conditioning, natural gas and condensate piping required replacement due to deterioration and leakage.

The project budget of \$3,396,000 is com-

not been able to sell any property. For two years I have not been selling any property in affiliation with them [Terra Loma] I have never sold anything for them." She said she had been working out of the Terra Loma office "a little over three years."

The sales drought, Cortes said, has lasted "at least two years."

Moreover, she said, "I spoke with the city attorney and he advised me there was no conflict."

Cortes acknowledged that she is professionally affiliated with Terra Loma Real Estate and its owner, Gene Carlstrom, but said that payments the city makes to Terra Loma for property management services are not passed along to her.

Last summer, Cortes acknowledged, "I have my real estate license in his [Carlstrom's] office. Whenever I sell any property, I have to have a licensed broker over me. He is the broker. I have my license under Mr Gene Carlstrom."

In September 2009, after a minor controversy broke out in Grand Terrace following publicity about Cortes' votes to approve a contract for and payments to the company she was professionally affiliated with, Cortes ceased voting on the consent calendar items related to Terra Loma, and the city's contract for services with Terra Loma was cancelled shortly thereafter. In the same time frame, Cortes obtained her own real estate broker's license and ended her affiliation with Terra Loma.

The councilwoman

prised of \$969,000 for the design, project management, inspection and construction of the completed parking lot expansion project; and the remaining project budget of \$2,427,000 for the remodel/expansion of the building is comprised of the following components: design costs of \$236,000; project management, inspection and permit costs of \$275,000; furniture, fixtures and equipment costs of \$378,499; security and electron-

insisted that city attorney John Harper had examined the potential for conflict inherent in the circumstance that existed up until August and found her in compliance with the law, including Government Code section 1090 and any other statutes that are applicable.

Cortes said that both she and Harper deemed her votes as a member of the Grand Terrace City Council to approve the contract with Terra Loma and make the payments to it as legal.

In filling out her Form 700s, Cortes made no reference to her employment by, or any income from, Terra Loma Real Estate, an examination of those documents filed by Cortes with the Grand Terrace clerk's office between 2002 and 2009 show. Indeed, Cortes shows no reportable income or interests of any type during that same period.

Despite the circumstances that led a dozen of her own constituents in Grand Terrace to file the complaint alleging the 1090 violations on her part, Cortes played a leading role in having the district attorney's office investigate and then prosecute another member of the Grand Terrace city council, Jim Miller, when he cast votes ratifying that city's consent calendar which have been construed as providing him with a financial benefit and thus likewise violating government codes section 1090.

On July 15, councilman Miller was arrested. *Continued on Page 3*

ics costs of \$225,000; construction costs of \$1,202,501; and a construction contingency of \$110,000.

The board of supervisors this week approved an amendment to the contract with Abboud Diamond Construction, Inc, in the amount of \$102,501 increasing the total contract amount from \$1,100,000 to \$1,202,501 for unforeseen conditions encountered during construction of the Barstow sheriff's station.

Colton*from front page*

mendations that city officials were either reluctant, or did not have the requisite funding, to implement. The audits finding was a predictable one: to facilitate and guide future development that would take place on a scale hitherto foreign to the city, more municipal employees and their supervisors would be needed.

No city official was willing to explain how it was that a study, at a cost of \$65,000, was needed to establish a finding that was already recognized by all of those conversant with city operations.

Rather than increasing the number of its employees and its managerial assets, City Hall has recently embarked on an unprecedented bloodletting, moving to eliminate as many as 60 employees, including department heads.

There has been some suggestion that Parrish provided Citygate with the work as a favor intended to ingratiate himself with the firm. Over the last two years of his career in Colton, Parrish was making increasingly desperate yet ever furtive efforts to land another position outside the employ of the city. As a former city manager, Parrish would have been a candidate for a position with Citygate.

Parrish did not obtain any such position with Citygate, but last year he finally landed a job as city manager in Covina. His departure from Colton was prefaced by questionable undertakings that, in addition to leaving the city without an experienced senior administrator, entailed the expenditure of another \$65,000 in addition to that paid to Citygate for services of dubitable or no demonstrable value.

That chapter in the city's history began in October 2007, when Parrish used his authority as city manager and his control over a discretionary fund at his disposal to extend a \$15,000 contract to psychologist Bill Mathis

without prior council approval. Parrish contracted with Mathis to provide the council with ethics training for an amount not to exceed \$15,000. In August 2008, at Parrish's behest, the city council amended that contract to an amount not to exceed \$50,000.

According to police chief Bob Miller, someone in Parrish's office issued Mathis two purchase orders of \$15,000 and \$50,000 that totaled \$65,000, instead of the council approved \$50,000.

Subsequently Mathis rendered services, the charges for which went well beyond \$65,000 to more than \$79,000. Those services included hosting public meetings and evaluating the services of the city manager and city attorney.

In some quarters of Colton, Mathis has been sharply criticized for aspects of the work he engaged in for the city.

Subsequent to the time Mathis was brought in to work for the city by Parrish, he began working as a headhunter, i.e., a recruiter, for the city of Covina. While he was yet employed as a consultant with Colton, Mathis recommended to the city of Covina that Parrish be hired as that municipality's city manager. No disclosure of his work for Covina was made to the Colton city council and Mathis did not disclose to Covina city officials that Parrish had favored him with \$65,000 worth of work in Colton. Covina hired Parrish as city manager in April.

After Parrish was in place in Covina, that city also lured Colton's former finance director,

Dilu de Alwis, to go to work as its contract finance director based upon Mathis' recommendation.

It has now been revealed that the negotiations to have De Alwis jump ship to Covina were ongoing as early as April, while Colton officials were seeking, with De Alwis' guidance, to finalize both revenue and expenditure figures in the city's 2009-10 budget.

In July, the council passed a budget anticipating \$35,789,217 in revenue into the general fund and anticipating \$35,782,470 in expenditures out of the general fund throughout the fiscal year running from July 1, 2009 until June 30, 2010.

In the city's electrical utility division, which is tracked on a separate ledger, De Alwis projected revenues of \$67,776,686 and expenditures totaling \$63,592,153.

In the last five months, however, city officials have been buffeted by a sobering reassessment of the city's financial condition. In early October, HDL Cos., which processes the city's tax revenue figures, determined that in 2007-08 the state of California overpaid Colton nearly \$1.5 million in sales-tax reimbursements. The city will need to refund that money to the state. Sales tax revenue into the city during the first quarter of the current fiscal year dipped by about \$100,000, presaging what is expected to be a continuing trend throughout the fiscal year, such that the city will take in over the whole 12 months \$400,000 less than De Alwis projected in July.

Cortes*from page 2*

ed by San Bernardino County district attorney's investigators and charged with violating Government Code section 1090. That charge stemmed from votes Miller had made to approve the consent calendar which contained check registers that contained payments for the city's legal advertisements that were printed in his wife's newspaper, the Grand Terrace *City News*. Miller's wife is the sole owner of that paper and two others, the Colton *City News* and the Loma Linda *City News*.

Miller had never voted to authorize the city to purchase the ads that ran in his wife's newspaper. The decision to run advertisements and legal notices in the Grand Terrace *City News* had been made by city staff members who had determined that the rates in the Grand Terrace *City News* were lower than or comparable to those offered by competing newspapers. Like Cortes, Miller relied upon assurances by city attorney John Harper that as long as the newspaper was his wife's sole property, the city's purchase of the ads from her represented for Jim Miller no conflict.

By 2008 Miller's formerly cordial rela-

tionship with Cortes had grown somewhat strained in that he had emerged as the leading opponent to promoting then-acting city manager Steve Berry to the permanent city manager's position. Cortes was the most enthusiastic of Berry's supporters on the city council.

As the effort to elevate Berry to the unquestioned top municipal management post progressed, Cortes, in conjunction with Berry, undertook to compromise Miller's authority.

Both began providing the district attorney's office with information relating to the city utilizing Miller's wife's newspaper, as well as the consent calendar voting that ratified payment for city legal notices and ads that ran in that publication.

Brazenly, Cortes made this approach to the district attorney's office despite her own parallel entanglement in the similar circumstance involving Terra Loma and the city.

It has been suggested that Cortes felt confident enough to report Miller because of a close personal relationship she has with district attorney Mike Ramos.

Cortes, like many other Republican elected officials in San Bernardino County, has a loose affiliation with Ramos,

who is also a member of the GOP. More recently, however, reports have surfaced to indicate that their relationship runs deeper than politics.

Ramos's womanizing and its impact upon the function of the district attorney's office has been an issue of some public concern since reports surfaced last May linking him with at least a dozen women who either work for him in the county prosecutor's office or with whom his official position brings him into contact.

Those connected to Ramos in this way are a former deputy district attorney, three current deputy district attorneys, a woman who served as his former campaign manager and treasurer and then briefly worked as a prosecutor's office consultant, a paralegal; two investigative technicians; an investigative technician, and an evidence technician, as well as Suzanne Hunter, a training consultant for the California District Attorneys Association and San Bernardino County Public Defender Doreen Boxer.

"Of course I am denying it," Cortes said of reports, including ones posted on the internet, relating to an affair between her and the district attorney. "Who would intimate that? Who would say that?"

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Ramos

from front page

affairs with or made unwanted sexual advances to eight woman who worked in the district attorney's office, as well as with San Bernardino County Public Defender Doreen Boxer and Suzanne Hunter, a training consultant for the California District Attorneys Association. The office employees named in the article were Ristow, who was identified by her previous name, Cheryl Barnes; deputy district attorney Ann Marie Duncan; Kelly Snelling, who worked as Ramos' campaign manager and treasurer; deputy district attorney Jane Allen; deputy district attorney Beth Houser; deputy district attorney Denise Yoakum; Brenda Rossi, a paralegal; and Megan Wagner, an investigative technician.

Ristow claimed that following the article's publication, she was subjected to repeated disciplinary action as Ramos and several of the office's employees grappled with bringing the scandal pertaining to his womanizing under control. She was targeted in this fashion, Ristow alleged, because Ramos believed that she would prove a weak link in the effort to keep Ramos' various paramours from confirming the existence of, and providing to various media outlets details about, the affairs.

While the investigation Kraemer and Schaper undertook cut a wide path and churned up considerable ground and minutiae with regard to the relationship between the district attorney and Ristow as well as several of the other women identified as his lovers, the charter of Curiale Hirschfeld Kraemer was to produce a report that would minimize the county's liability with regard to Ristow's claims. Accordingly, the final report Kraemer and Schaper delivered had a focus that was considerably narrower than the breadth of its inquiry and the attendant facts that inquiry uncovered.

"Whether Ramos did or did not have welcome - or unwelcome - sexual relationships with the females identified in that [May 29, 2009 *Sentinel*] and subsequent articles and blogs is irrelevant to whether or not he, or individuals at his request or suggestion, retaliated against Ristow, adversely affecting the terms and conditions of her employment. [T]he scope of our investigation was appropriately limited to a determination of whether Ristow suffered adverse employment actions committed or condoned by supervisory representatives of the county. We were neither tasked with, nor would we have accepted, an unfocused inquiry into their rather sa-

lacious allegations made in the subject May 28, 2009 *Sentinel* article."

The article in question was actually published on May 29.

The officially released report and conclusion offered by Kraemer and Schaper in large measure downplays the retaliation Ristow claims to have suffered at the hands of those acting on Ramos' behalf.

In this way, a substantial amount of the report devotes itself to Ristow's extended absences from the office during and after her lunch hour on at least two known occasions, once prior to the article's appearance and another such absence after the article was published. The report further documents that Ristow violated the department's dress code by sporting a nose piercing and on occasion failing to adequately cover two tattoos. Moreover, Ristow, who worked at the district attorney's office on Hospitality Lane in San Bernardino, which is relatively close to the Riverside County border, was upbraided by one of her supervisors for having utilized her county-issued vehicle for crossing into Riverside County to have lunch.

Kraemer and Schaper noted that several of those interviewed made reference to statements by Ristow, in the aftermath of the publication of the May 29 *Sentinel* article, that evinced "her

attitude progressively getting worse," or indicated she was growing "very emotional, volatile and antagonistic," was "looking for a reason to go off work because of stress," and "was making everyone uncomfortable with her demeanor."

Among the office employees who offered statements to Kraemer and Schaper indicating that Ristow had engaged in activity that was contrary to office policy, inappropriate, disruptive or which in some other fashion merited discipline were investigative technician Bianca Ralston, supervising investigator Bill Sellers, deputy district attorney Denise Yoakum, chief of investigations Michael Smith, and deputy district attorney Diane Harrison.

In the conclusion to their report, Kraemer and Schaper state, "Ristow did not produce any evidence, nor did we uncover any information, that suggests (1) that Ramos was materially involved in [initiating an] investigation motivated by retaliatory intent [or] improper retaliation, (2) that there were individuals who were similarly situated (regarding their workplace misconduct or performance) but who were treated more leniently by these supervisors, or (3) that [Ristow's office colleagues and supervisors] engaged in other, ancillary acts that would indicate any form of bias against Ristow."

In delivering a legal document designed to meet the goal of limiting the county's liability, Kraemer and Schaper nevertheless provided information that paradoxically would support the conclusion that members of the office, in particular Sellers and Smith, undertook an effort to "make book" on Ristow after the publication of the May 29 article.

Most, though not all of the documentation which Kraemer and Schaper cite with regard to Ristow's misdeeds which became the focus of the disciplinary action against her is dated after the article's publication.

Similarly, a significant number of the complaints quoted in the report relating to the deterioration of Ristow's attitude are cited in the context of her expressions of anger and frustration, as well as a feeling of abandonment by Ramos, in the aftermath of the publication of the article disclosing her sexual relationship with the district attorney.

And despite Kraemer and Schaper's assertion that making a determination of whether an affair actually transpired between Ristow and Ramos was beyond the bounds of their assignment, passages of their own narrative as well as the citation of statements of several witnesses either inadvertently, indirectly or directly suggest that Ristow's insistence that such an affair took place has a basis in fact.

In asserting that there is no basis for Ristow's assertion of sexual harassment, Kraemer and Schaper cite as supporting data their acceptance of the assertion that Ristow "acted out concerning the denial of the affair."

Ristow claims that her affair with Ramos began in 2003 at the California District Attorney Investigators Association conference.

Kraemer and Schaper acknowledge in their report that more than five years before the *Sentinel* article was published, reports of a relationship between Ristow and Ramos had been spreading through the district attorney's office.

"There is little question that immediately following the 2003 California District Attorney Investigators' Association conference at Lake Arrowhead - in September, October and November of 2003, there were a number of conversations among investigative technicians who attended the conference and other technicians who had not related to hearing directly from Ristow that she had spent the night with Ramos at the conference," Kraemer and Schaper wrote. "There were, of course, no witnesses to any intimate behavior, but it was notable that the story was contemporaneous with the event, and several employees related that Ristow was quite open about it even though Ristow did not consistently assert that the story was true. Indeed long before the *Sentinel* article was published, many employees had either heard directly from Ristow or from others in the office as to both the existence of an alleged relationship and some indication that it had lasted for some period of time and had ended."

Elsewhere in the report, Kraemer and Schaper write, "Ristow alleges her affair with Ramos began on September 15, 2003, while both were in attendance at the California District Attorneys Investigators' Association Conference held in Lake Arrowhead at the UCLA Conference Center. Ristow claims that their intermittent sexual relationship began that evening, and lasted through February 2005; she alleges that she ended the relationship because he was not going to leave his wife. Ristow states that at their 'break-up meeting,' she asked Ramos if she should leave the department because of discomfort, and he said 'no.'"

According to Kraemer and Schaper, Ristow told them that on the day before the *Sentinel* article was published, "On May 28, 2009, I received a phone call from [deputy district attorney and Ramos' office.]"

Continued on Page 5

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Ramos

from page 4

mos confidant] Michael Fermin; I called him and he asked me to call Mike Ramos. I called. He (Ramos) said that he is being named in a "local rag" and that my name is being placed in the article along with other women. I said 'I did not get the benefit of the allegations,' or something like that. During the conversation he said, remember what we talked about - we just don't talk about this."

Ristow claimed that members of the district attorney's special response team - i.e., prosecutor's office investigators - provided security or stood as a watchout during Ramos' furtive trysts with her. She also claimed that their sexual encounters often took place in the DA's office.

Kraemer and Schaper said that they inquired directly with Ramos about "the nature of any relationship with Cheryl Ristow."

They reported that "Ramos stated that his recollection of his first communication with Ristow was at the 2003 California District Attorney Investigators' Association conference at Lake Arrowhead. Ramos recalled nothing more than the fact that Ristow was present at the function and was helping with administrative duties (check-in of attendees and the like.) He denied any physical relationship with Ristow."

According to Kraemer and Schaper cell phone records for both Ramos' and Ristow's county-issued phones showed "sixteen (16) outgoing calls from numbers assigned to Ramos to claimant ([i.e., Ristow] between October 2, 2003 (the first such call noted) until October 4, 2005; [and thirty-three (33) outgoing calls from claimant to Ramos between December 10, 2004 and December 15 2005.[and] five (5) incoming calls from claimant to Ramos, and two (2) calls labeled as "call wait."

Ramos claimed that the calls between them related to his efforts to

help Ristow place her daughter into a school in the Redlands School District, where he had previously been a member of the school board.

Through cross-referencing of materials and interviews with investigators, members of the district attorney's office and other county officials, the *Sentinel* has learned that Kraemer and Schaper accrued, but chose not to utilize in the completion of their report, statements that lend further credence to Ristow's assertion of a sexual relationship with Ramos.

According to a source involved in the investigation, Ana Ambriz, who currently works as a secretary to the office's gang unit and who was a former clerk in the sexually violent predator unit, along with investigative technicians Jody Lonegran, Jan Barandon, Megan Wagner and Brad Borrero either gave, or were in a position to provide, statements to Kraemer and Schaper that would have supported Ristow's contention that she had a lengthy relationship with Ramos.

Furthermore, the *Sentinel* has learned, Kraemer and Schaper, were provided with information to the effect that Ramos had affairs with Anne Marie Duncan, Brenda Rossi, and Beth Houser.

Ristow this week told the *Sentinel* that Kraemer and Schaper "left way more out of the report than what they put in," including material and statements that would corroborate her statements. "I know what the truth is. So does Mike Ramos," she said.

She said that Ramos' claim that the phone calls placed between them pertained to efforts on his behalf to help get her daughter into the Redlands School District were a fabrication. She acknowledged that one phone call - but only one - dealt with that request. The lion's share of their phone calls were made, she said, prior to her moving to Redlands in June of 2005 and well before her daughter matriculated into the Redlands Unified School District in August of 2005.

Ristow said she was initially very angry with the *Sentinel* for identifying her as one of Ramos' paramours in the May 29, 2009 article. "I made a mistake in getting involved with him. I thought I had put that behind me and out of the blue I had to live through all of that again," she said.

She said she was furious Ramos did not do anything to protect her, and instead encouraged her to cover for him.

"When I got through to him on the phone, he told me basically you are going to lie for me," she said.

She said she became involved with Ramos in 2003 in the aftermath of the breakup of her marriage. She said Ramos invited her into his cabin at the Lake Arrowhead resort during the conference there and tearfully told her that he was locked in loveless marriage. Ramos subsequently told her that he loved her and that he intended to divorce his wife after their youngest son graduated from high school.

She ended the affair when she realized he

was conning her, Ristow said.

"He's a sex predator of the worst kind," she said. "He goes after vulnerable women. The relationship was consensual. I was his employee. He was the district attorney. He should not have put me in that position."

Ristow said she met her current husband around the time that she broke it off with Ramos and was contentedly moving on.

"I never looked back until the article came out," she said.

Her life has been a nightmare ever since, she said. "This has really hurt my husband," she said. "He is an incredible man. He has stood by me the whole way."

She said that Ramos is a serial womanizer and that eventually he will be exposed entirely. She said the county is courting disaster by trying to keep a lid on the scandal instead of realistically confronting the problem.

"This is just the tip of the iceberg," she said. "If other women could speak up about what happened to them with him without fear of retaliation or humiliation, they would be coming out of the woodwork," Ristow said. "Someone had to go first and I guess it was me."

Ramos told her about his affair with Beth Houser, Ristow said.

Despite the report and its dismissive tone, she said she was not going to relent.

"I have an attorney and I am going to fight this the whole way," she said. "Mike Ramos thinks this is over. Well, I have news for him. It has just started."

Put Form W-4 to Work for You



By Achilles Yanez

When was the last time you looked at form W-4? Probably since you started your last job. But do you know this form holds the key to putting more money in your hand week per week?

Working for Inland Professional Tax Service for the past few years has allowed me help as many clients as possible receive either a large refund or a larger paycheck on a week by week basis.

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fund the interest you could gain is any where between 12 to 30 percent, depending on the year. Even in a savings account you would get gain some interest.

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Inland Professional Tax Service is located at: 255 N D St. Suite 217, San Bernardino Ca 92401. Office phone 909-991-7659.

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Old Mark's Tavern

from front page
granted in 1997 to allow up to six events per week that would accommodate as many as 175 people, allow for the dispensing of alcohol, in the form of beer and wine, and the serving of meals, accompanied by music. The hour to which the events could continue was extended to 11 p.m. and 10 p.m. on Sunday.

On December 17, 2008, two of the Chaffey Communities Cultural Center Foundation's board directors, Mike Stevens and Max Williams succeeded in convincing the Upland Planning Commission to grant the conditional use permit modification, despite the protests of eleven nearby residents. The vote to allow the serving of alcohol and the other intensifications of use passed by a 4-0 vote.

A group of residents, represented by attorney

James Reiss, filed an appeal on December 31, 2008 seeking to nullify the planning commission's decision.

Those involved in the appeal questioned the wisdom of allowing alcohol at the site, less than 400 feet from Pioneer Junior High School. An energetic effort to galvanize the public against the modification of the conditional use permit ensued, including the printing and distribution of 8,000 leaflets that inveighed against the Chaffey Communities Cultural Center's plan to operate the banquet hall.

More than 200 residents turned out at the February 9, 2009 council meeting when the hearing on the appeal was scheduled, filling the entire seating capacity of the meeting chambers and leaving dozens standing in the aisles as the meeting was to begin.

In the face of the energetic show of opposition, Stevens, the president of the Chaffey Communities Cultural Center, withdrew the proposal.

Earlier this month, the Chaffey Communities Cultural Center Foundation again applied for a modification of the conditional use permit. This time the foundation sought a modification that did not include the serving of alcohol but asked for a substantial expansion of the frequency of use - seven days a week - together with extending the hours of operation until 10 p.m. and boosting the crowd capacity to 175 people.

That proposal was to be heard by the planning commission on January 27.

Alarming for many residents, the city used the same nomenclature for the modification for the item to be reconsidered by the planning

commission on January 27 as the modification considered by the planning commission on December 17, 2008 - conditional use permit 97-10 modification No. 1

This led to the widespread suspicion that some sort of bureaucratic sleight of hand was being orchestrated, whereby the previous modification - including the provision of alcohol - would be approved. Others who did not believe the city could legally make such a switch, nevertheless felt the expansion of the facility's hours, attendance and days per week would pave the way for another modification in the future that would include the serving of alcohol.

Reiss was again retained and 38 residents, including a 13-year-old student at Pioneer Junior High, which borders the property upon which Old St. Mark's Church sits,

turned up at the January 27 planning commission hearing to protest the modification.

But as occurred 11 months ago, Stevens at the last minute pulled the proposal.

This left over three dozen residents more than a little miffed.

Planning commission chairman Mark Tundis further angered residents by his use of procedural protocol that prevented those who had gathered from registering their views.

When some citizens sought to make their comments during the public comments section of the meeting that preceded the actual hearing for the modification item on the agenda, they were informed that input regarding the issue with regard to Old St. Mark's Church could only be provided during that portion of the meeting devoted to

the proposed modification. After the public comments session was concluded, he then announced that the modification proposal hearing was being postponed, again thwarting those that wished to weigh in with regard to the matter from being heard.

After a second item on the agenda was heard and some of those who had remained attempted to elicit Tundis' attention to see if he would indulge them in the voicing of their comments, he instead adjourned the meeting.

Tundis was then obliged to quickly take his leave from the meeting chambers as several members in attendance hurled epithets his way.

One middle aged man was overheard telling the 13-year-old Pioneer Jr. High student, "This is not an example of good government."

County Officials Restricted from Supporting Legislation

The county of San Bernardino this week tightened its restrictions relating to officials' advocacy for or against pending legislation.

A policy that has been in place since 2002 relating to the county's legislative lobbying efforts prohibits county employees from advocating a legislative policy that in any way clashes with the county's efforts with regard to the creation of new or modification of existing law.

The board of supervi-

sors made amendments to guidelines relating to its legislative activities.

Under the direction of the board of supervisors and in coordination with the county administrative office, the office of legislative affairs is responsible for overseeing and coordinating the county's legislative advocacy program. Legislative affairs is responsible for analyzing annual state and federal legislative platforms and, in accordance with the strategic priorities and

policy direction of the board, ascertains what the county's stance with regard to pending legislation is.

The department of legislative affairs further serves as a liaison between the county and the federal and state legislative delegation.

The county's director of legislative affairs is Lance Larson. Its current state lobbyist is Platinum Advisors, a firm which employs former assemblyman Bret Granlund. t

On February 5, 2002,

the board approved an administrative report, which recommended numerous enhancements and changes to the county's legislative program, including updates to County Policy No. 01-06, pertaining to employee legislative activities, which states no appointed county official or employee is permitted to present a position on any pending legislation other than the official position adopted by the board.

The item also included County Policy No. 01-10, pertaining to the county's sponsoring of legislation, defining the development of the county's annual legislative platform.

Additionally, the board adopted County Policy No. 01-11, pertaining to adopting a po-

sition on pending legislation, which designates that only the board of supervisors may adopt an official county position on pending legislation.

This week the county board of supervisors updated policies 01-06, 01-10 and 01-11 to reflect current legislative procedures within the county. The operational policy updates adopted this week were intended to ensure the advancement, centralization, and coordination of the county's legislative priorities under the office of legislative affairs.

Incorporated policy procedures eliminate duplication of services, and increased efficiency, according to Larson.

The recommendation makes changes to existing county policy to re-

Continued on Page 7

Starr

from front page

McDougal will support Starr in acclimating himself to the city manager's function. McDougal has already declared that he is recommending that the city council eventually extend to Starr a contract as city manager.

In addition to mentoring Starr, McDougal in his special consultant capacity will function in the role as deputy city manager, devote himself to spurring economic development, and examining the city's procedures and institutions.

McDougal will not be required to report to work daily after March 1 and will no longer be a fixture, as he has been for the last decade-and-a-half, at city council meetings nor at the meetings of the redevelopment board.

Read all about the intrigue in San Bernardino County political scene at inlandpolitics.com on the worldwide web.



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County Gets Bargain on Johnson Valley Firehouse Lease

The county has entered into another favorable leasing arrangement with the Johnson Valley Improvement Association for use of the association's facility as a fire station.

On March 21, 2000, the county board of supervisors approved a lease agreement with a term of nine years and three months for an

1,800 square foot community fire station located at 50567 Quail Bush Road in Johnson Valley. The original term of the lease was from February 15, 2000 to May 4, 2009. Due to an administrative oversight by both parties, the lease had been in holdover since the scheduled termination date of May 4, 2009. The Johnson Valley Im-

provement Association and the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District concur that there is a continuing need for a community fire station and both have agreed that extending the lease term ten years would be appropriate since either party can terminate the lease with 30-days notice.

Under the deal ratified

by the board this week, the county will pay the association one dollar per year for the next ten years to continue to operate out of the firehouse.

According to Pat Denen, the county fire chief, "The San Bernardino County Fire Protection District is aware there are no options to extend the term and desires to stay at this location. The

cost to construct a new fire station would not be incurred if the district were able to remain at this location."

No other bids on the lease were sought, given the minuscule lease payment involved. "County Policy 08-02-01 regarding the lease of privately-owned property allows the use of an alternative procedure when compli-

ance with requirements of a formal request for [bids] would unreasonably interfere with the financial or programmatic needs of the county or when the use of an alternative procedure would otherwise be in the best interest of the county," said David H. Slaughter, the county's director of real estate services.

Letter to the Editor

It is sad that incidents like this have to happen to bring about change. Let's put things in proper perspective. County Department of Mental Health Director Alan Rawland is not the problem or neither is Dr. Ralph Ortiz or the 3 therapists who have no training in law enforcement. It's our media and elected officials who are asleep at the switch of a runaway locomotive. They are more interested in posturing and corporate greed than doing what is right for the people.

Alan Rawland is appointed by the board of supervisors who have taken a back seat when it comes to training law enforcement and code enforcement in recognizing people with mental disabilities (CIT Training). It should have been mandated that all

law enforcement personnel have to take the CIT course and there should also be a similar crash course that trains mental health professional in law enforcement. Recently Alan Rawland and Dr Ortiz received commendations for setting up the county help line 211 to include dispatching CIT teams to juveniles and adults that need services thus freeing up law enforcement's hands. Statistics show last fiscal year 08-09 ending in June law enforcement called crisis intervention team to assist 1,249 times.

Our prisons in Calif. are shameful and are no more than mental institutions that house way more mentally ill inmates than people without mental disabilities. No one, not even the Terminator, has had

the backbone to take on the prison guard union who have controlled our spineless manipulating politicians with generous donations and a public media attitude of let's not be easy on crime. Even the FBI, while investigating the Cochran killings, were run off the side of the road while leaving on a prosperous day of investigating all the murders by unruly prison guards. If you wish more info on the subject matter please visit our web site at www.calpra.com (Calif. Prison Reform Act) CALPRA was established in 1992 in a effort to inform the public.

Society needs to wake up to the reality that the only ones who profit on today's criminal justice system are law enforcement unions and officials, prison guards

and guards who are often found living in \$500,000 houses, bail bond agents, expensive defense attorneys who often contribute to judges' political campaigns and get special deals for guilty rich clients.

As a political activist I can say that Alan Rowland and Dr. Ralph Ortiz have always held a open door policy to this writer and are available to the general public for questions and honest answers.

Supervisor Biane's efforts would be better served if he looked at his own obvious mental disability and quit grandstanding on the backs of the people with mental disabilities. Biane and his other political cohorts need to author a bill training mental health professionals in a crash course in law enforcement tactics. Some local politician needs to put pressure on local law en-

forcement officials, judges, district attorneys, and public defenders to be trained to recognize people with mental disabilities. Society can no longer foot the price tag that has been attached to the many special interests who have a stranglehold on our state criminal justice system.

ET Snell
Founder of C.A.L.P.R. A.
www.calpra.com

Editor's Note: Snell's letter refers to a murder that occurred at a half-way house on Bixby Way in Upland on January 8. The home housed several inmates/patients who were participating in the California Department of Mental Health's Forensic Conditional Release Program, or ConRep. The state Department of Mental Health Web site refers to ConRep as a "statewide system of community-based treatment, evaluation and supervision services

for judicially committed individuals and Mentally Disordered Offenders."

ConRep participants have been found to be not guilty in the court system by reason of insanity or are mentally disordered offenders who receive mental health treatment as a condition of parole.

In the case in Upland county mental health officials had come to the home the morning of the killing to check into circumstances relating to a failed drug test involving one of the occupants. One mental health worker found a bloody knife. Another spotted blood soaked pants in a bedroom. Later, when the Upland police arrived to look into the report of a stolen vehicle, the mental health professionals failed to inform the police about the knife or the bloody pants. The murder victim was later found in the home's garage.

Legislation

from front page

flect current office practices.

According to Lance Larson, the county's director of legislative affairs, the old and new policies have been put in place "to make sure everyone is on the same page and all of the county's legislative advocacy is coordinated. There was the notion that one county department or another was sometime advocating for something another department or the county administrative office didn't know about. We are just streamlining this so we are all aligned as far as legislative policy goes."

Larson said the new policy not only prohibits

county employees from taking a position at odds with a position mapped out by the board of supervisors but disallows their taking a position on legislation before the board has enunciated a preference one way or the other.

"If there is a bill out there where they are looking for county support, then my office will bring that to the board, asking for support on a specific bill," Larson said. "We will see if it has any impact positively or negatively or financially on the county. If certain proposed legislation does go against the county's interests, we would recommend against it. But it is the board, as the county's elected leaders, who

are the ones who make policy decision as to what position the county is to take officially. Department heads cannot make a decision in that regard."

Larson said that to his knowledge, during his tenure with the county no department head had taken a public stand with regard to any pending legislation that went counter to what the board had recommended.

"I don't think we've had an instance where someone broke with board policy," he said.

To keep things clear, Larson said, the county is now in the practice of publishing "our legislative platform approved by the board every year composed of issues that are current so that de-

partment heads and staff know what our policy is on a variety of items."

The policy changes passed by the board this week, Larson said, merely modernized the language in the policy to

eliminate references to positions that no longer exist and to clarify the restrictions.

Larson said the county restrictions on legislative advocacy do not apply to independently elected

county officials such as auditor-controller, sheriff, district attorney or assessor, all of whom, he said, are free to hold a position contrary to that of the board.

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\$450,000 Freed up for Senior Meals

The county this week devoted \$452,430 in money made available to the county from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to providing senior nutrition services at eight locations around the county.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was enacted by Congress and signed into law on February 17, 2009 in an effort to stimulate the nation's economy during the current recession. The act was intended to create jobs, promote the nation's economy, and assist those most impacted by the recession. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has made ad-

ditional federal funds available to the Elderly Nutrition Program administered by the California Department of Aging.

The Department of Aging and Adult Services, which acts in the capacity of an area agency on aging in San Bernardino County, has been allocated funding from the California Department of Aging to provide services under the Elderly Nutrition Program Nutrition Stimulus Grant contract. The Department of Aging and Adult Services will utilize the Elderly Nutrition Program Stimulus Grant funding to provide 83,063 meals to eligible seniors throughout the

county. The Department of Aging and Adult Services has provided nutrition services since 1978 via contracted vendors selected through a formal procurement process.

On July 14, 2009, the board of supervisors approved Revenue Contract 09-659 with California Department of Aging in the amount of \$452,430 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to provide senior nutrition services for the period of April 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010. In order to implement these services in a timely fashion, current senior nutrition service contractors were notified of the availability of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds and instructed to submit a program narrative outlining how the American Recovery and Reinvestment funds would be used.

Of the 11 current service providers the county had been funding, only eight - Barstow Senior Citizens Center, the city of Montclair, Family Service Association of West-

ern Riverside County, the Steelworkers Oldtimers Foundation, the Bonnie Baker Senior Citizens Club, the Crest Forest Senior Citizens' Club, Hi Desert Meals on Wheels, Inc., and the City of San Bernardino - requested program enhancements for allowable American Recovery and Reinvestment Act expenditures to provide meals to eligible seniors throughout the county.

The county board of supervisors this week gave the Barstow Senior Citizens Center \$34,620; the city of Montclair \$76,387; the Family Service Association of Western Riverside County \$160,494; the Steelworkers Oldtimers Foundation \$90,529; the Bonnie Baker Senior Citizens Club \$19,900; the Crest Forest Senior Citizens' Club \$12,000; Hi Desert Meals on Wheels, Inc. \$30,000; and the city of San Bernardino \$28,500 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding for the provision of 83,063 meals to eligible clients throughout the county for the period of February 1, 2010 through June 30, 2010, at a total cost not to exceed \$452,430.

Southern California Style

Vanity Sizing: What it Means To You, the Manufacturer and the Retailer

By Grace Bernal

Why do clothes differ in size at different stores?

As we strive for physical perfection, we hang on to the clotheslines of fashion. The average American woman's weight fluctuates radically as super -models scale down to nearly nothing. Hence we are pushed away from the true physical idea and led to believe that a size is the maker of beauty. Since the 1930s the fashion industry has been cheating its customers - predominantly women - out of true sizing, in order to get them to purchase their pants, skirt, and dresses. Thanks to the fashion industry and underweight models, the influence of vanity sizing manipulates mostly females by telling her size matters.

Researchers measured 1,000 pairs of women's pants and found as much as an 8 1/2 inch variation in the size of a waist. Vanity sizing scales down clothes sizes so that what once was a size 10 can be labeled down to a size 6. Currently in America and Europe there are no set standards for clothing sizes. This allows clothing manufacturers full flexibility when designing patterns for specific sizes.

Some shoppers say there should be no size less than a zero. However the newly found size 00 is just the latest proof of "vanity sizing": stores are cutting clothes larger for women so they will buy them in smaller sizes, and feel better about themselves. Whether we like it or not, vanity sizing isn't going away. Primarily because designers would rather deflate sizes now more than ever for one reason, "the smaller the size the larger the profit in their wallet!"

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